The Middlebury Campus

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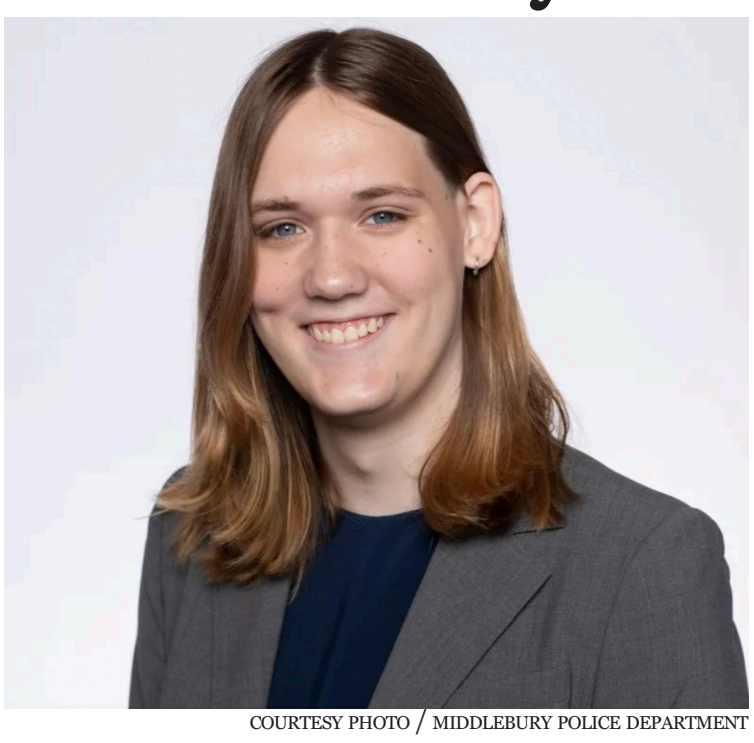
Search for missing college senior underway



COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY POLICE DEPARTMENT

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN
Editor in Chief

Lia Smith '26 was reported missing to the Middlebury Police Department on Sunday afternoon. Smith's father filed the report after not hearing back from her via cell phone and communicating with her friends, who last saw her in a building on campus at 9 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 17.

Smith, 21, is 5'11 and about 160 pounds, with brown hair and blue eyes. She is a double computer science and statistics major from California, and previously competed on the college's Women's Swimming and Diving team. She is a part of the Chess Club and Women in Computer Science.

Police are actively searching for Smith with college Public Safety, and request that anyone with information about her whereabouts contact the police department at 802-388-3191.

"If anybody knows anything, even if it's a friend that's just afraid that maybe the information they may have might not be useful, please share it with the police because anything is worth us looking into and trying to decipher whether it benefits the investigation," Sergeant Nathan Hayes said on Monday morning.

According to a statement released by Middlebury Police on Monday afternoon, a drone camera has been deployed as part of the search. Hayes on Monday declined to provide further

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OVER 1,000 JOIN 'NO KINGS' PROTEST ON MIDDLEBURY TOWN GREEN

ANNABELLE DOUCET/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Protestors gathered around the gazebo, sang patriotic songs, participated in chants and listened to five speakers for two hours on Saturday.

By NOOR KHAN & ANNABELLE DOUCET
Layout Editor & Contributing Writer

On Oct. 18, approximately 1,100 people, including over 150 students from the college, gathered on the Middlebury Town Green from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. for a "No Kings" rally organized by Indivisible Middlebury, joining nationwide protests opposing the Trump administration. The BBC reported that nearly seven million people participated in similar demonstrations across the country.

Prior to the rally, students gathered at the Middlebury Chapel to chant and march to the Town Green together, where they merged with the crowd of community members. The students were led by Will Hinkle '26 and Ninive Calegari '26, who spent the past month mobilizing those who wanted to get involved with the rally. Student volunteers in orange safety vests accompanied the march, as passing cars honked in support.

Five local speakers, from State Reps. Jubilee McGill and Amy Shelden to Middlebury lawyer Tad Powers, addressed the crowd from the Town Green bandstand. Farhad Khan, owner of The Dollar Market, Middlebury Select Board member and two-time president of the Islamic Society of Vermont, spoke about his experience as a Brown man in Vermont and his hopes for change in the country.

"No Kings Day reminds us dignity should never be compromised," Khan said. "No one should be treated like a suspect simply for existing. We are not asking for special treatment, we are asking to be heard and respected."

Lincoln resident Reverend

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COLLEGE IMMUNIZATION EFFORTS PARTNER WITH LOCAL PHARMACIES, EXPAND CLINIC OFFERINGS THIS FALL

ABBIE CHANG/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

This year, the Center for Health and Wellness is expanded their flu clinic immunization programming to additional locations, and has offered clinics in BiHall and the Athletic Center.

By COLE CHAUDHARI
Senior News Editor

To compensate for staffing changes and retirements this fall, the Center for Health and Wellness (CHW) partnered with local pharmacies to guarantee that student needs for vaccine and immunization offerings are met.

Working with Shaw's and Albertsons allowed the CHW to properly allocate their own staff in response to student requests and demands, according to Director of Health Services Alison Finch.

"We wanted to use our available staff to prioritize ensuring access to Health Services appointments and services. Partnering with an outside pharmacy allowed us to do that, as well as offer

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Otter Creek Child Center to reopen after months of renovation, aiding child care crisis

By LILA DeLUCA
Contributing Writer

After approximately seven months of renovation and expansion, the Otter Creek Child Center facility, located at 150 Weybridge Street, is set to reopen its classrooms on Dec. 1. The project represents a major step in the broader community effort to address the child care shortage facing families across Addison County, including Middlebury faculty and staff.

According to the nonprofit organization Let's Grow Kids, Vermont's child care system is stretched thin: Though approximately 21,131 children under the age of five in Vermont are likely to need some form of childcare, only 12,380 full-day, full-year slots exist for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and just 8,090 meet the state's high-quality standards. That leaves 61% of infants likely to need care without a quality option. The average two-child household spends around $26,000 a year on childcare, and educators earn a median of $39,315, often without benefits — below a livable wage.

The renovation will allow the two locations under Otter Creek — College Street Children's Center and Otter Creek at Inn on the Green — to merge into a single facility that doubles their combined capacity from 69 to 139 child care spots, having added 12,000 square feet to its size. The expanded center will be fully staffed, employing a total of 24 classroom teachers, six "floating" educators, three program directors and a family & engagement coordinator, according to reporting from the Addison Independent.

The new design, created by a contractor specializing in early-learning facilities, features classrooms and spaces tailored for infants and toddlers. New features include toddler-sized toilets, expanded parking, a kitchen equipped to serve more than 400 meals per day and covered playground porches that allow outdoor play in all weather.

Founded in 1984 and directed by Linda January for the past 14 years, the nonprofit has provided infant, toddler and preschool education for children up to five years of age. Middlebury serves as a hub for childcare resources

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NEWS

Taniya Noori '25.5 creates tutoring program for girls in Afghanistan

By SAM LUEKE

Writing Center sees uptick in traffic, launches new scheduling system

By KAI ARROWOOD

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LOCAL

Middlebury hosts fourth annual car show

By TING CUI & SIMON SCHMIEDER

People say a dog resembles its owner, and a similar relationship often holds true for cars. At the Middlebury Car Show & Fall Festival on Sunday, Oct.

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OPINIONS

On being enough: the value of imperfection

By TESSA HUSTED

I graduated... and moved down the street

By GEORGIA MILLIMAN-PERLAH

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ARTS & CULTURE

Exhibit "Finding Hope Within" showcases incarcerated artists

By MAYA ALEXANDER

Preservation and Progress: The prints of Piranesi and their journey to Middlebury

By KIARA DOOKIE

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SPORTS

Field hockey team stumbles in third home loss

By JULIA RANDOLPH

Middlebury Crew competes at Head of the Charles Regatta

By VICTOR KORTE

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College immunization efforts partner with local pharmacies, expand clinic offerings this fall

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immunizations that we would be unable to offer on our own, such as Covid, tetanus, and immunizations, in addition to flu," Finch wrote to The Campus.

Roughly 120 students received vaccinations at the Oct. 2nd clinic in McCullough, which was the first of three planned for this semester. During that clinic, students had the option of receiving the flu shot, a Covid-19 booster or both.

This marks an increase in offered immunization sessions as compared to last year, and there were also more available locations to receive shots. While all clinics previously took place in Wilson Hall, BiHall and the Athletic Center (AC) also held sessions this year. This expanded programming arose as a result of the efforts of Lindsey Burnham '26, a member of the women's squash team.

Last fall, Burnham witnessed how a scarcity of accessible vaccine clinics enabled waves of student-athletes to fall ill, given that the clinics conflicted with their practice and game schedules.

"Last year, none of the squash team got vaccinated besides me, and everyone got the flu," Burnham explained in an interview with The Campus. "People miss a week or two weeks from it, which is likely missing five games, and that affects you for the rest of the season because your endurance just isn't there."

Burnham said that while this idea germinated out of making vaccines more accessible to student-athletes, the expanded programming will benefit all Middlebury students. She explained how the added clinic locations offered quick appointments for students that do not demand a lot of time and can slot easily into their daily schedules.

"We were like, we can probably have a place in BiHall for people — if they have a lab until four, they can go down right after and get their flu shot. The same if an athlete's going to practice, or if someone's going to the gym — it's right at the entrance," Burnham said.

Burnham commended the CHW for being receptive to and supportive of her ideas on how to make vaccinations more accessible.

"They were really responsive to it. I sent them an email and we had a chat over the summer... I said, you know, we should have clinics in different locations, and here are the times I think might be good. Essentially, she just did exactly what I said," Burnham said. "She was super nice, and very willing to listen."

Burnham also worked with Assistant Dean and Associate Director of Health Professions & Science Advising Hannah Benz to coordinate the expansion of the immunization clinics.

"When meeting with Lindsey last J-Term, I inquired about her squash season, and she mentioned that several teammates had come down with the flu, forcing the team to forfeit matches. That sparked a conversation about how immunizations protect not just individuals, but entire communities, and a follow-up spring meeting got us thinking about what barriers might exist that prevent students from getting vaccinated," Benz wrote. "Lindsay developed a thoughtful student-centric initiative. On a residential college campus, flu immunization is vital, and Lindsey's work will go a long way towards achieving herd immunity and keeping Middlebury healthy."

Burnham also worked with Caroline Adams '26, a member of the women's lacrosse team and co-president of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, to formulate a plan for the vaccine clinics.

Adams also emphasized the convenience afforded by the clinic location of the Athletic Center.

"As athletes, Lindsey and I wanted to make it as convenient as possible for busy student-athletes, who are already doing so much to take care of their health, to get vaccinated. We organized to have one of the three campus clinics at Goldsmith Lounge in the Athletic Center so that athletes and all other students that frequent the AC only need an extra 5-10 minutes in their day to get vaccinated. In bringing a free, walk-in vaccine clinic to the AC, we hope to reduce the barrier to healthcare for as many people as we can," Adams wrote.

The final of the three vaccine clinics will be on Thursday, Oct. 23, from 1-4 p.m. in the Goldsmith Lounge in the Athletic Center.

Search for missing college senior underway

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details on the police department's investigative procedures in case their publicization hinders search efforts and did not respond to requests for updates since.

"If there's any concern, or if Lia thought she was in trouble for anything, she's not, nobody's in trouble for this," Hayes said. "We just truly want to find out where she is and make sure she's safe."

> "If anybody knows anything, even if it's a friend that's just afraid that maybe the information they may have might not be useful, please share it with the police," Hayes said. "Anything is worth us looking into and trying to decipher whether it benefits the investigation."

On Tuesday evening, students began working with Public Safety to form search groups, communicating on GroupMe to collect volunteer information. As of Tuesday night, a form collecting information of volunteers had over 170 responses and Wednesday morning students had begun meeting with college administrators to discuss further steps, according to Meissa Atmani '26.

> "If there's any concern, or if Lia thought she was in trouble for anything, she's not, nobody's in trouble for this. We just truly want to find out where she is and make sure she's safe."

In an email to the college community Sunday night, Vice President for Student Affairs Smita Ruzicka and Associate Vice President of Safety Demitria Kirby alerted students, faculty and staff of Smith's disappearance. In a follow-up email Monday night, they shared available care and counseling resources available to students and reiterated their commitment to finding Smith.

"We know it can be difficult to experience this uncertainty and we will provide regular updates and share more information as it becomes available," the email reads.

"THE OPPOSITE OF ADDICTION IS CONNECTION": PRISM CENTER HOSTS CONVERSATION ON HARM REDUCTION

By MET LY
Contributing Writer

The Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life has been open for students since 2024. MET LY/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

On the evening of Oct. 8, around a dozen people gathered for dinner catered by Taste of India at the Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life for a reflective discussion on harm reduction and substance use pertaining to the LGBTQIA+ community.

The event was a collaboration moderated by Anna Hand, health educator for Health and Wellness Education at the college, Fable Hawthorne, youth outreach coordinator at the Turning Point Center of Addison County, and Janae Due, director of the Prism Center.

Established in 2024, The Prism Center is a new addition to Middlebury. It is a safe space for queer and trans students, providing outreach, education, consultation, resources, programming and advocacy services.

The event was conceived of by Due, who wanted to "bring the community together for a conversation about substance use and LGBTQIA+ identity [...] in a no-shame environment," they said. They also said the timing earlier in the semester was important, as "students would gain some skills to be safe while using substances or support friends that may need care."

Dallas Enemark '28, an intern at the center, viewed the event as a way to find community.

"It doesn't always feel like there are a lot of low to no use students on this campus," Enemark said. "So it's important that we are able to talk about how we feel about that and what we might be able to do about it."

Participants were greeted with informative flyers created by Health and Wellness Education outlining harm reduction strategies for different substances and ways to support a friend who is abusing substances, along with a comprehensive list of both on-campus and off-campus resources.

Due described Hand from Health and Wellness Education as a "wheelhouse on campus" when it comes to these conversations. The partnership with Health and Wellness was "an obvious choice," according to Due.

Hand brought the harm-reduction philosophy to the discussion by emphasizing compassion and practical safety over judgement or prohibition. Throughout the event, she emphasized that "the opposite of addiction is connection," affirming the importance of community in mitigating harm.

Due thought of the partnership with Turning Point Center, a non-profit recovery center in Middlebury, as a clear choice.

Attendee Ramyn Zhang '28.5 agreed, describing relating to a "touching and vulnerable" experience Hawthorne, Turning Point Center's director, shared that then "left the biggest impression on [them]."

"Sometimes you might be doing all the right things and still feeling wrong and anxious, and that's okay as long as you keep trying," Zhang said.

Hand views partnerships with local organizations like Turning Point as vital, describing the organization as a staple in our community. She pointed out the fact that the college has already partnered with them for Narcan training, campus resource fairs, and similar events to the dinner hosted in the past.

"To make any type of health and wellness education work sustainably, it's key that we partner with community resources," she continued.

Participants also noted how the dinner format itself contributed to the success of the conversation.

"In providing dinner, it's giving people [an] incentive to join events." They also pointed out that it eases the atmosphere, making it "less serious and more of a chat...which is great," Zhang said.

"Food always brings people together," Kayden Silevicz '28, another participant, added.

Due confirmed that the dinner format was intentional. They touched on the fact that food provides something to do while talking and listening.

"Sometimes it's easier to delve into difficult topics when there's a secondary thing to do, and for this event, it was eating together," Due said.

As the event concluded, organizers viewed it as a success.

"Event turn-out feels like a win," Hand said, noting that everyone who signed up showed up during a busy time of the school year, and everyone had the opportunity to share in a productive conversation.

Due expressed appreciation for hearing student's perspective on the intersection between substance abuse and queerness.

"It helps me better understand what students may need and how to best support them with programming," Due said.

"I'm always impressed with Middlebury College students' abilities and desires to dig into conversations, and after any event I host or attend...I'm excited and energized to keep the conversation going to build a culture change," Hand said.

TANIYA NOORI '25.5 CREATES TUTORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

By SAM LUEKE
Staff Writer

In August of 2021, the Taliban's violent takeover of Afghanistan halted the education of millions of women. In 2023, Taniya Noori '25.5 made it possible for a few of them to continue.

Afghan Tutoring Network, founded in 2023 by Noori, is a remote tutoring service that provides support for Afghan women and girls who are now banned from schools under Taliban rule. Since 2021, Afghanistan has been the only country in the world that bans secondary and higher education for girls and women. Increasingly stricter limits are being placed on women's ability to exist in public. According to a press-release from UNESCO, women are also banned from speaking on the radio and from travelling long-distance without the company of a male relative.

"Women are banned from everything, no opportunities for them. Later on, they weren't able to go to parks, weren't able to travel without male companions, so they were stripped of all kinds of rights," Noori said.

Along with several of her classmates, Noori was forced to leave Afghanistan in 2022. She moved to Qatar, and from Qatar she moved to Rwanda, where she attended the School of Leadership Afghanistan (SOLA), a boarding school for Afghan girls that relocated to Rwanda after the Taliban takeover. SOLA was founded by Middlebury graduate Shabana Basij-Rasikh '11, who encouraged Noori to continue her education at Middlebury. Five months later, Noori enrolled at the college.

"I just couldn't look away from the suffering that Afghan girls, my sisters back home, were facing," Noori said, "They can't go to school, they can't go to colleges."

When she launched the program, Noori had eight students, most of whom she knew from home, as well as relatives of Afghan students at Middlebury. Over the course of two years, the program has expanded to support over 31 students and 40 tutors. Tutors host remote sessions for students once or twice a week, with two or three tutors assigned to each student. Because most tutors are American, English language skills are a priority, but those who have already achieved an advanced level of English might take subjects such as biology and computer science.

Most tutors working with the program are retired educators from Middlebury, though the array of volunteers also includes tutors from the broader Vermont area, as well as current Middlebury students. Ann Straub, Middlebury resident and an organizer for the program, connects students and tutors, as well as offering sensitivity training. Vyas Nageswaran '26 runs a book club for some students, where they read a range of literature, including "The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini, a book that tells a long and detailed history of violence in Afghanistan.

Tutors meet with students remotely through an encrypted WhatsApp channel, and their information is not shared online.

"We do everything we can to mitigate the risks," Noori said.

Because many students are coming from impoverished areas, Afghan Tutoring Network also pays for monthly internet bills and phones. Internet connections can be spotty, however, and small phone screens are not always enough to establish a strong learning environment. To rectify this, Afghan Tutoring Network is raising money through GoFundMe in the hopes of providing laptops to students.

Noori also put out a call for any person with relevant skills to volunteer. The program doesn't just need tutors; anyone willing to help coordinate, create or manage a website, or help fundraise can volunteer.

"Anything could be useful, because our program is expanding every day. However, we need more people to be involved. Not only that, but people should just be aware of what's happening around the world. Condemn what the Taliban is doing to Afghan girls," Noori said. "They have banned schools and colleges, but they can't stop girls from learning."

COURTESY PHOTO/ TANIYA NOORI

Taniya Noori '25 created her remote tutoring service to uplift women and girls in her home country of Afghanistan. The program has run for two years and now supports over 30 students.

WRITING CENTER SEES UPTICK IN TRAFFIC, LAUNCHES NEW SCHEDULING SYSTEM

By KAI ARROWOOD
Staff Writer

This year, Middlebury's Center for Teaching, Learning and Research (CTLR) launched a new scheduling system, QuadC. The platform allows students to more easily request one-on-one meetings with specific tutors than previous systems and enables CTLR staff to track student engagement.

According to Interim Writing Center Director Melissa Hammerle, student traffic in the Writing Center has been high so far this semester, especially among first years. Before QuadC, it was rare for students to request a tutoring session. The new platform has spiked the number of one-on-one meetings, adding more personal appointments to the usual drop-in hours tutors are assigned.

"I've been a writing tutor for two years and this year, without a doubt, has been the busiest," Maddy Russell '26, a Writing Peer Tutor, said. Russell also tutors the first year seminar "Anything That Ticks" and works during drop-in hours.

Hammerle also noted that the CTLR has consolidated into one space in Davis Family Library, streamlining tutoring and making it easier for students to locate writing help. The number of drop-in hours has also increased from last year. The center boasts nearly 50 student tutors as well as two professional tutors, who have all been kept busy by the bustle of midterms and eager first years.

By meeting with peer tutors, especially those engaged with certain first year seminars, the Writing Center offers first years an opportunity to adjust to the demands of college-level writing. Student tutors participate in a year-long training process that prepares them to provide compassionate, as well as academic feedback. Working with a peer makes the often daunting task of asking for help more manageable.

"I think [the first years] feel that it's more approachable," Russell said.

Russell observed that writing tutoring can also serve as a space to ask for broader academic support. Students with questions about certain courses a tutor might have taken could use a one-on-one appointment or a conversation during drop-in hours to discuss any concerns.

"Writing is pretty personal, so it ends up kind of branching out into a lot of different spaces," Russell said. "It's more of a mentorship outside of just writing."

Writing Center tutors are equipped to help students in every stage of the writing process. Some students attend one-on-ones or drop-in hours simply to brainstorm, while others bring in a finished draft for a thorough lookover. Wherever students are in their work, tutors are there to help them along, and students are taking advantage of that resource.

Although the CTLR is currently seeing a lot of traffic, student participation is hard to predict. Due dates are not uniform across classes and student tutors often experience lulls and peaks in usage as the semester progresses. Hammerle hopes that the data collected from QuadC will help the center better anticipate demand.

The added complexity of artificial intelligence (AI) use in student writing makes the Writing Center's future hazy. As incoming classes are increasingly familiar with the use of AI in academic writing, student tutors may have to shift their approach. Professors each have their own preferences surrounding generative AI, requiring student tutors to become familiar with particular policies.

As the year goes on, QuadC will generate more data to aid Hammerle and other CTLR staff in structuring peer-to-peer tutoring. Students are also able to write reflections about their experience with the center on the platform, offering a qualitative layer to analyze. For now, the CTLR remains in the back of Davis with open arms, welcoming any student with questions about their writing.

ABBIE CHANG/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

With the implementation of a new scheduling system, the Writing Center has seen an increase in one-on-one bookings with Peer Writing Tutors.

ADDISON INDEPENDENT AND THE CAMPUS LAUNCH JOINT E-NEWSLETTER "INDY NEWS"

Students may have noticed something new in their email inbox the last couple of Fridays. After the college began offering students a free online subscription to the Addison County Independent recently, the local newspaper has launched a weekly e-newsletter called "Indy News" that teases stories from both The Campus and the "Addy Indy."

The newsletter is a great way to keep up with what's happening both on campus and in Addison County and is part of the Addy Indy's new revenue mix to keep their journalism "vibrant and competitive," according to a recent article announcing the paper's new 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Login information for the Addy Indy's website can be found in student's email inboxes.

The newsletter will feature The Campus' biggest stories of the week and we hope that it directs more traffic to our website; we publish 20-24 stories weekly on the college and town in print and online.

Over 1,000 join 'No Kings' protest on Middlebury Town Green

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Co'Relous Bryant, the final speaker of the event, urged the crowd to continue to show up and raise their voices to protect democracy, bringing tears to many in attendance.

"We know how to do this," Bryant said. "It's not the first time our nation has lost our way and it's been people of good will willing to stand up and come together that's pulled us back from the brink and it's time to do it again."

He invoked the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of American ideals under attack from the Trump administration.

"Lady Liberty is tired of being lied on. She says: 'I meant it when we said we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with unalienable rights. Yeah, I meant that,' she says," Bryant said to the crowd.

Bryant ended his speech and the official rally by urging the crowd to keep fighting tyranny and to hold compassion close to their hearts.

For community members and students alike who have felt unsure how to navigate these times, the rally provided a sense of mission. Myrah Valmyr '27 believed the protest was an important step to moving away from general passivity.

"[This] is like a morale boost — like a 'No, keep going.' If you think your efforts individually aren't doing anything, look at how much space we can take up physically, emotionally, and mentally," Valmyr said. "I want to see familiar faces, I want familiar faces to see mine, and remember that we're all in solidarity with each other."

A number of protestors emphasized that the movement was not intended to be partisan, and they hoped to build a coalition across the political spectrum.

"The name of the event is No Kings, but really what we're standing in solidarity for is pro-democracy, freedom of speech, respect for our values of the melting pot of America and bringing everyone together," Hinkle said.

The crowd was filled with dozens of unique costumes, from monarch butterfly wings to leggings donning Ruth Bader Ginsburg's face to paper maché costumes of President Donald Trump. Lynn Austin and Richard Short of Middlebury, two self-identified history fanatics, dressed up in Revolutionary-era outfits.

"We are against what's happening to our democracy and we decided to get dressed in what people wore last time there was a king in power," Austin said.

ANNA DOUCET / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A protestor marches through downtown Middlebury with a "protest puppet" of Elon Musk.

Others found symbolism in the American flag.

"I resent the fact that the MAGA republicans have kind of hijacked the American flag as a symbol when it is a symbol that is for our entire country, which means all of the people," Middlebury resident Amy Beaupré said. "So I really want to show that the American Flag is something for all of us, and it's for all Americans and represents all Americans."

I WOULD LIKE US TO DO SOMETHING UNPRECEDENTED: TO CREATE OURSELVES WITHOUT FINDING IT NECESSARY TO CREATE AN ENEMY
THE DANGER OF LOSING OUR HUMANITY MUST BE MET WITH MORE HUMANITY.
~ TONI MORRISON
WE ARE BETTER THAN THIS!

ANNA DOUCET / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Protestors hold signs they made on the Town Green.

> "The name of the event is No Kings, but really what we're standing in solidarity for is pro-democracy, freedom of speech, respect for our values of the melting pot of America and bringing everyone together."

In addition to donning red, white and blue, many protesters were decked out in yellow. One participant dressed as a bee and carried a duck stuffed animal. The color was intended to represent bipartisanship and peaceful neutrality.

Among the more striking visuals was a mechanized puppet of Elon Musk, crafted by an artist who identified himself only as "Omar." He said he travels the country creating politically themed art pieces, and hopes these pieces send a message to President Trump.

"It's clear that Trump and his cronies are feeling the pressure — the fact that they're preemptively referring to peaceful protesters out today as terrorists tells you that they're scared," Omar said. "They want to project power, but they don't have as much power as they're projecting. The more numbers we show, the more powerful we are and the weaker they are."

Organizers hope that the rally was just a first step towards further action.

"We want to inspire a sense of hope, a sense of power and momentum that we can then take to contact our legislators and continue making a statement to the current administration," Hinkle said.

Several protesters told The Campus they saw this moment and the coming months as pivotal for the country's future and stressed the importance of acting sooner rather than later.

"This is a time that we're going to look back on and think about which side of history we were on," Valmyr said. "It's less about how it looks than how you're going to live with yourself afterwards."

Editor's Note: Charlotte Roberts '25.5 contributed reporting to this article.

OTTER CREEK CHILD CENTER TO REOPEN AFTER MONTHS OF RENOVATION, AIDING CHILD CARE CRISIS

Continued from Page 1

in the region, and according to January, at least half of Otter Creek's students are children of college faculty or staff, who are given priority on a waitlist more than 200 names long.

"That is our goal with the expansion — that our enrollment reflects the community around us," January said in an interview with The Campus.

The college has supported Otter Creek for decades through financial contributions. According to Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration David Provost, the college has contributed over $360,000 annually for more than 10 years through the United Way of Addison County, with much of that funding directed toward Otter Creek.

"We have a responsibility as the largest employer to help solve community problems," Provost said in an interview with The Campus. "Otter Creek will also have no costs going forward on the capital expansion, which will allow them to use all their financial resources to pay good teachers and to offer benefits."

The $11 million renovation was partially funded by a $6 million anonymous alumni gift to the college, earmarked for community initiatives, according to Provost.

Beyond the college's support, countless organizations and individuals have also been instrumental in advocating for policy changes in order to provide families with the financial support they need to afford quality child and infant care.

Cheryl Mitchell, who served as the Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Human Services in Vermont for 10 years, has long championed policy reforms to expand early-education funding.

"Over the years, we got quite a few pieces of legislation passed that have gradually worked towards really improving the situation for families with young kids, including universal Pre-K, in which families, no matter their income, are eligible for 10 hours a week of free, high-quality Pre-K," Mitchell said in an interview with The Campus.

Mitchell also mentioned the impact of Act 76, a Vermont law enacted in 2023, funded by a payroll tax called Child Care Contribution, that drastically increased funding for the state's childcare system to subsidize the accessibility of childcare and increase wages for educators.

"Being a nonprofit allows us to really diversify our income as much as possible, and not just solely rely on tuition," January said. "With more and more families receiving assistance through the Vermont Childcare Financial Assistance Program, more and more of those tuition dollars are coming from the state and not from families' pockets."

LILA DELUCA / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The New Otter Creek Center located on 150 Waybridge Street will open it's doors this upcoming December.

Recent federal policy changes have also made child care more affordable, according to January. In Oct. 2024, eligibility for child care subsidies expanded to families earning up to 575% of the federal poverty level, benefiting many middle-income Vermonters. At Otter Creek, the share of families receiving state aid has risen from 44% to more than 60%.

The increased subsidies have boosted the center's budget by over $100,000, allowing for significant pay raises. Since January's arrival in 2011, base-level teacher salaries have increased by nearly 50%, and all staff now receive comprehensive benefits.

"I think Otter Creek will become a real example for what can be done with some perseverance, and the fact that it took so long to happen will be reassuring to other communities to not give up," Mitchell said.

The ribbon cutting for the reopening is scheduled for Nov. 15.

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Middlebury hosts fourth annual car show

By TING CUI & SIMON SCHMIEDER
Business Director & Senior Sports Editor

People say a dog resembles its owner, and a similar relationship often holds true for cars. At the Middlebury Car Show & Fall Festival on Sunday, Oct. 12, Middlebury resident Diane Mott, the owner of an orange 1973 Volkswagen Type 2 camper van, wore a peace sign baseball cap of a matching shade, dangly orange Volkswagen van earrings and a shirt with the words "they can't steal what they can't drive," a nod to the vehicle's manual transmission. With large sunglasses pulling the outfit together, her nature befitted that of a classic VW bus owner.

Mott's van was one of the many special vehicles in town as cars new and antique, their owners and visitors transformed Main Street for the fourth annual Middlebury Car Show & Fall Festival. Organized by the Addison County Chamber of Commerce and the Better Middlebury Partnership (BMP), the event brought over 30 vendors, various food trucks, music, children's activities and of course, cars, parked from the Middlebury Marquis to the Congregational Church.

The show's 75 entries represented a truly international collection. American muscle cars were parked beside British roadsters, and a diversity of German autos shared the road with lightning fast Japanese machines. The vehicles ranged from a rare 1965 Shelby Cobra with distinctive writing adorning its hood to a jet black, right-hand drive Nissan Skyline GTR, a Japanese market import capable of hitting 165 mph from the factory. However, the show was more than just a gallery of unique cars. It was a rich collection of stories and personalities.

Peering through the open rear door of Mott's Volkswagen van, a small wooden plaque read "God Bless our Camper." Vinyl wood-grain panels lined the interior, and the sun peeked in between intricate yellow curtains pulled to the side. A mismatched collection of pillows rested on the bench seats, which were a shade somewhere between the orange exterior and yellow curtains.

"All original," Mott boasted from her folding chair on the sidewalk. Getting up from the chair, she told us about the van. The Type 2 is the oldest of her collection of Volkswagen vans, but is still functional for camping trips. Like the typical Volkswagen vans of the era, the roof can be propped up to create extra sleeping space and increase interior headroom. Every label and safety warning in the car was also printed in German and English, a testament to the van's origins and wide-reaching reputation.

SIMON SCHMIEDER / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
A red Avanti, one of the cars at the Middlebury Car Show & Fall Festival on Oct. 12.

A few cars past the Volkswagen camper, another orange vehicle appeared in the lineup — yet this car was nearly twice the length, extending well over the double yellow lines of Main Street. A rust orange 1971 Buick Riviera sat parked in the sunlight, a true American "landshark" according to its owner, Les Myers. With doors long enough to access both rows of seating and expansive plush bench seats, an ambitious driver easily could fit six passengers. They may not all have seatbelts — an option the owner paid extra for — but nobody would be fighting over the nonexistent airbags.

Myers of Wells, Vt., explained the car's history alongside his own. First interested in planes as a child, cars were a more feasible hobby for Myers. Yet he still found his own way to fly, heavily modifying old vehicles to reach speeds of over 150 mph.

"Lucille" is painted on the trunk of the car like a tattoo, a V8 engine lurks under the hood and a modified air suspension system allows Myers to keep up with newer cars on twisty roads. Myers himself is a member of the Snake Mountain Cruisers, a group that hosts car shows, goes on drives, "pigs out" at restaurants and drives some more.

Farther down the street, in front of Danforth Pewter, sat a classy British roadster. Its silver-haired owner, Michael Sussman, wore a deep green sweater beneath a wool vest and tan corduroy pants, perfectly coordinated with the car's paint and pristine beige leather interior.

Sussman traveled from Williamstown, Mass. with his British Racing Green MG MGA MK1 1600, and happily stood by his immaculate roadster as we approached. The MG was not his first British roadster, though. His love for such cars began in high school; his wife told us that when they first met, he was driving an Austin-Healey Sprite, another small and stylish British coupe.

Sussman permitted seating in his MG and used Socratic questioning to explain its quirks.

"Why doesn't it have door handles?" he asked, prompting consideration of the design rationale (to reduce drag and increase speed). He demonstrated opening the car by pulling a wire within the door panel and guided the starting sequence: pull the choke with both hands, depress the clutch and turn the ignition key. He also verified familiarity with the functions of the three pedals in a manual transmission.

Although there was no recognition for the best story, Sunday's competition did recognize excellence in cars across multiple other categories. The Best of Show, decided by car owners' votes, was won by a 1967 Chevrolet Corvette Sting Ray. The People's Choice, cast by visitors, was a 1949 Chevrolet 3100 Pickup. Finally, the Kids' Choice award, determined by the number of small rubber cars placed on vehicles by young attendees, went to a bright blue 2023 Chevrolet Corvette. Vehicles were also recognized within their respective decades, with the "Best of" award ranging from the 1920s to the 2010s.

TING CUI / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Diane Mott poses with her 1973 Type 2 VW Bus.

I MISS LIBERAL-REPUBLICANS: AN OLD VERMONT POLITICAL TRADITION

Op-Ed

Tenzin Dhelotsang *is a member of the class of 2027.*

"Liberal-Republicans" often seem like an oxymoron in today's politics. In a time when political identity feels like a team sport, it's hard to picture a Republican being called a liberal without some irony. Yet in the Green Mountain State, that phrase has historically represented an entire political tradition, one founded on independence and a sense of duty rather than strict ideological adherence.

For much of the 20th century, the Republican Party dominated Vermont. Instead of facing opposition like the Democrats, the Republican Party had internal factions, one of which was the Gibson-Aiken wing. Named after Senators Ernest W. Gibson and George Aiken, this faction represented moderate pragmatism and often supported liberal-to-progressive policies of the era. They typically presented themselves not as ideological crusaders like those seen in today's politics, but as problem solvers fighting for Vermonters.

Former Governor Jim Douglas, an executive in residence at Middlebury, has extensive knowledge of the subject. He explained to me how "The Old Guard" members of this Liberal-Republican delegation — such as Senators Aiken, Robert Stafford, and Jim Jeffords — were seen and acted like "gentlemen." This description perfectly captures the essence of this era of Republicanism: public service was about integrity, not performativity.

To be a Liberal-Republican in Vermont meant believing that the government should be efficient and fair. Being fiscally responsible while addressing social issues was not a contradiction but a moral obligation that came with the job. After all, this is the state that gave Abraham Lincoln the highest popular vote share in the nation in 1860.

One of my favorite aspects of this side of the party was the strong emphasis on the environment, which even left a legacy of Green Mountain environmentalism in the country before "green politics" was coined. Sen. Aiken promoted the preservation of small farms and forests, even cosponsoring the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, which helped establish sustainability within U.S. forest policy. Sen. Stafford was well known for gaining bipartisan support for the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, which provided a legal basis for major disaster declarations and their procedures. Senator Jim Jeffords also contributed by pushing the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, which helped create new programs to address issues like acid rain, urban air pollution and toxic air pollutants. His environmental beliefs also put him at odds with the national party, leading him to make his infamous party switch.

Today, the Republican Party in Vermont looks different. The state that once embodied Liberal-Republicanism is now best known as the "Land of Bernie." In areas where progressive politics seem to thrive, the state has consistently supported Democratic presidential candidates since 1992. However, it has continued to vote for Republicans to some extent.

Current Governor Phil Scott embodies this longstanding Vermont Republican tradition as a fiscal conservative with socially liberal views, often advocating for pragmatism. This approach has made him one of the most popular governors in the nation, earning him an approval rating of +58%. Clearly, at some level, the appeal of pragmatic Republicanism is accepted in the local setting, and he himself demonstrates the balance and decency that Vermont values, as Aiken and others have shown.

Although the party has undergone massive changes, becoming smaller than before and no longer dominating elections, Republicans have made notable gains. In the 2024 election, the office of the Lieutenant Governor was flipped from the Progressive David Zuckerman to the Moderate Republican John Rodgers, with Rodgers winning 48.8% to Zuckerman's 47.1% in a close race. Republicans also made gains in the State Senate and House, increasing from 7 to 16 and 37 to 56 seats, respectively, which ended the Democratic supermajorities in both chambers.

These gains stem from various factors, including frustration with rising property taxes, healthcare costs and broader affordability issues that drive young people out of the state. Additionally, Governor Scott's calls for electing legislators who will work with him on these issues contribute to the gains. These may have resonated with voters not through ideological beliefs, but through perceptions of competence and civility.

So, what does this mean for the future of the Vermont GOP? Some argue that old Liberal-Republicans have long left the party, finding a new home with the Democrats. Others say that the rise of the MAGA movement has permanently shifted the Republicans towards a more conservative stance. A clear example of this can be seen in the 2022 Vermont Senate elections, where MAGA conservative Gerald Malloy defeated moderate Scott/Douglas-endorsed Christina Nolan, 42.4% to 37.7%. Malloy was later defeated in the midterm election for Senate, with Democrat Peter Welch winning 68.5% to 28.1%.

Maybe the path forward isn't doubling down on the national conservative rhetoric, but rather a return to the "Liberal-Republican." Vermont's political DNA still seems to embrace candidates who listen, compromise, and lead with integrity. Gov. Scott won with 73.4%, outperforming Bernie with 63.2% on the same ballot. The issues that Vermonters care about, affordability, housing, and the environment, among other things, aren't solved by partisan shouting, but by the skills of problem-solving that are missing from the moderates of old.

My admiration for the Liberal-Republicans of the past might be idealistic, and they probably will not regain the prominence they once had. However, the values once defined by this traditional Vermont legacy — independence, stewardship, and decency — are now missing in today's era of toxic partisanship. Maybe the future of Vermont Republicanism isn't about adopting national rhetoric but about remembering the qualities that once characterized this state.

I graduated… and moved down the street

Op-Ed

Georgia Millman-Perlah *is a member of the class of 2025.*

This week, I bought my membership to the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-Op. It was $20.00. This $20.00 is my share in the ownership of the Co-Op. This is something I do not necessarily understand. What I do understand, though, is that going to the Co-Op is literally the highlight of my week. I walk in and take a deep, full breath of the perfect air and make a beeline for the produce where I select Only The Best carrots and scallions and whatever else I have envisioned for the week. I meander and peruse, reminding myself to move slowly and to savor this 20-30 minutes of peace. Maybe I pick a new flavor of Siggis Skyr yogurt, or try a different shape of overpriced, artisan rice noodle. My life has changed in both big and small ways since graduating from Middlebury this May, and living in my college town post-graduation was not in my five-year plan.

Should I spend two hours doing my laundry at the place in town or should I mooch off of my friends who still live in the Middlebury dorms? Should I add feta to the orzo salad that I eat every single day, or save $7 this week? These decisions make up my week now.

This time last year, I was submitting the first chapter of my honors political science thesis. Or, I was spending three hours in Proctor Dining Hall, sitting in the faithful back corner (at the mini table on the side of the drink area) cycling through different friends as they came and went. I rotated between gossiping with my favorite people and reading whatever political science journal article I had been assigned for my Future of U.S Democracy senior seminar. My weekends were full of late dinners with friends and deciding which 30-rack of cheap beer we were going to purchase from BevCo this time. Then, this past May, I graduated.

At Middlebury, I was aptly prepared for certain challenges I might encounter in the real world. These challenges range from understanding Athenian statesmanship in the Peloponnesian War to being able to analyze the presentation of father-son relationships in the Loman family of "Death of a Salesman." Middlebury prepared me for reading with a critical lens, for listening to different perspectives and for maintaining friendships despite busyness.

College did not, however, prepare me for the loneliness and responsibility of The Real World. After the research position I had secured studying the democratization of big tech at the Harvard Kennedy School was defunded by the Trump administration, my job search pivoted — I just needed something to do after graduating that was not going back to Fairfield, Conn. and working at my local climbing gym. I landed on becoming an Admissions Counselor for Middlebury College. To my grandmother's mild dismay, I would no longer be moving to a city alongside countless peers. I said goodbye to my vision of joining a run club, meeting people at bars and spending hours in the Museum of Fine Arts, and said hello again to a town I thought I knew like the back of my hand.

Living here as an adult in the real world has reintroduced me to Middlebury in ways I did not expect. As a student, I would never have been able to take the time to get to know the cashier at the Co-Op who changes the shape of her eyebrows every week. I would not have had the time to read a new stack of library books (for pleasure) weekly. I would not have had the time to spend two hours running outside, exploring new roads rather than rushing a 30-minute lift between meals or classes.

My social life still includes trivia at the Marquis every Thursday and long coffee dates at Haymaker, only now I can slow down enough

GEORGIA MILLMAN-PERLAH / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Siggis Skyr yogurt at the Middlebury Co-Op, where Milliman-Perlah shops.

to read in the movie theater before trivia begins and the baristas in Haymaker know my name and order. I get a new free plant off of Front Porch Forum weekly and I visit the kittens at the Humane Society. In a week, I will be a reading mentor to an elementary schooler in Bridport. I go on hikes now, not for quickness or efficiency, but to get to know the land I inhabit and enjoy the view. I continue the radio show that I have hosted for four years with WRMC on Tuesdays at 6 p.m., only now I have the time to painstakingly curate each song on the playlist.

In no time at all, my life has changed immeasurably. I don't live with my best friends in an Atwater suite and I don't have my thesis deadlines looming large ahead of me. I don't eat in Proctor or spend my evenings at club meetings or events. When I graduated, I thought that staying in Middlebury would mean staying still. But there is movement here now. Small-town life after college is not a failure to launch my Real Life; it's just different. Small-town life after college has shown me the value of simple pleasures and finding enjoyment in mundane, everyday tasks. Maybe next week I will try that new flavor of Skyr, but either way I will love my 30 minutes in the Co-Op.

ON BREAKING YOUR FALL AT MIDDLEBURY

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

As your mid-terms drag on and Thanksgiving Break still feels far away, it can be easy to put your head down and power through the next few weeks of autumn. However, we want to encourage students to instead look at this time as an opportunity to engage in some of our favorite fall activities that will become impossible once that first snow settles on the ground.

While consuming high doses of caffeine and hardly sleeping may feel like an activity in itself, that's not what we're here to talk about. We're also not here to tell you that you have to embark on ambitious hikes every weekend to take full advantage of the season. But the end of October and beginning of November presents a number of "uniquely Middlebury" opportunities to help you slow down and reflect. We compiled a list of things to do before the snow begins to fall, right on campus and a little further out.

If you have access to a car, our simplest suggestion is going for a long drive with the windows down and soaking in the brisk air. Turn up your favorite music, and enjoy the scenery around you. Driving in the direction of Cornwall will bless you with some of the best mountain and farmlands views Middlebury has to offer. You can stop at the Hathaway Farm & Corn Maze and get lost with your friends, or wander it solo. You still also have time to drive over to Sunrise Orchards for some fall apple-picking, or, if you are 21, check out Woodchuck Cider Mill for a fall beverage and a tour, or even just to enjoy their cider house tap room.

Some of our favorite fall activities are geared towards taking advantage of the outdoor spaces Middlebury has to offer us right by campus. Take a minute outdoors to reflect on the semester behind you, and the one you have ahead. Before we hit the snow and mud season, make sure to go for a walk down to the Knoll and follow its winding paths demarcated by the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) signage. Put your headphones on, turn up your favorite music and use your time alone as a study break away from the library or BiHall. Even just gazing at our natural fall foliage that covers the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks is an excellent way to slow down and relax.

Given our rural location, our lack of light pollution means that fall stargazing is a fantastic way to enjoy the milder weather fall offers. On Sunday, Oct. 26, walk into town to experience the annual trick-or-treating down Main Street this year as a part of the Halloween spooktacular. A favorite is always the various Día de Los Muertos celebrations that occur across campus, so make sure to look out for the Spanish house and Department of Luso-Hispanic Studies for upcoming events. One may even consider picking up a copy of The Campus and appearing mysterious and academic while holding your pumpkin spiced beverage from Crossroads Café or So-Full Sisters.

Despite the many activities you can try before the fall season is over, we also recognize that fall can be a time when you may just want to slow down and return to the things that comfort you. Watching an old film you love and making a cup of tea away from your homework and extracurriculars or sports is a vital part of experiencing this season. You can be a great student while still taking time to slow down and reflect on your experiences and care for your mental health.

As we think about how to take care of ourselves during the end of the fall season, we can also become more mindful about taking care of those around us. Even if all you want to do is curl up in bed with a warm beverage, check in on those around you that may be doing the same. We all have fall anxiety, and this is a good time to ask others how they are doing. Are they handling their midterm stress well? Are they overwhelmed? Do they just need to talk to someone? Do they want to go for a fall foliage walk with you?

Involving those around you is a good way to ensure your end of fall season at Middlebury is filled with joyful activities that help you regulate your academic stress levels and enjoy what our unique location has to offer us.

ON BEING ENOUGH: THE VALUE OF IMPERFECTION

Op-Ed

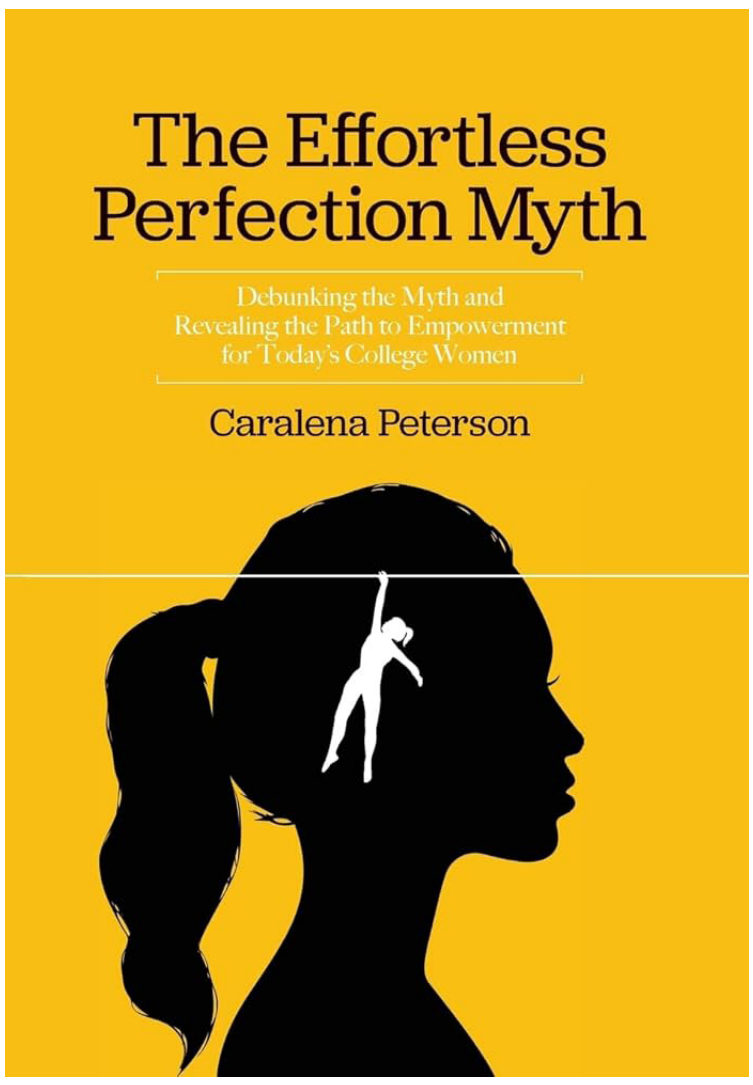
***Tessa Husted** is a member of the class of 2025.5.*

I grip the steering wheel tightly as the white spire of the chapel looms into view. Despite the excitement I feel for my last semester, a familiar stream of thoughts enter my mind: What if I don't do well in my senior projects? How will I be prepared for a future career? What if I can't demonstrate all I've learned thus far? What if I can't get a job after I graduate? Embedded in this line of thinking are a number of assumptions: firstly, that anything I do in the future depends upon my success in college. Secondly, I must produce my best quality work because I'm an experienced senior. Most importantly, if I don't meet these expectations, I will have failed.

It's taken me four years to realize the point of college isn't success, at least in a traditional sense. I'm not implying that performing well in college isn't a worthy endeavor. The problem is that our American educational system places value on rigid, linear career pathways with a narrow idea of success. As a perfectionist thinker, I tend to fixate on my goals rather than my learning process. Over the last four years, I've had to retrain my brain to challenge this kind of thinking.

It wasn't until my friend slipped a bright yellow book into my hands two years ago that I realized how widespread my experiences were. "This seems right up your alley," she said to me as I stared down at the cover with a mixture of joy and relief. "The Effortless Perfection Myth" is by visiting professor and speaker Caralena Peterson. She had given a talk earlier that day about the mental health challenges affecting collegiate women.

"Effortless perfection," a term coined by the Duke University Women's Initiative Report in 2003, is the "expectation that one would be smart, accomplished, fit, beautiful, and popular, and that all this would happen without visible effort." Perfectionism is not a new


The Effortless Perfection Myth
Debunking the Myth and Revealing the Path to Empowerment for Today's College Women
Caralena Peterson

subject of talk at Middlebury. Renowned feminist Courtney Martin visited back in 2014 to discuss the harmful aspects of this high-achiever mindset.

As an academically rigorous institution, Middlebury expects a lot from its students. However, it also means students expect quite a bit from themselves. Last year, I learned more about Middlebury's academic culture from Matt Longman, the Dean of Sophomore Experience, who'd been a crucial resource for me when I struggled with severe anxiety.

"Behind that competition, it's almost self-selecting that you have a higher percentage of people who, in meeting the profile to get into [Middlebury], have probably taken on a lot of perfectionist traits," he said as I leaned back on the couch with his dog, Kylo. A surprisingly emotionally-attuned pet, Kylo looked up at me with imploring eyes, both paws resting on my lap. Matt's words certainly made sense to me. I'd had dozens of conversations with my own friends about mental health, so I wasn't surprised that he'd recognized this issue as well.

These struggles weren't something I anticipated undergoing as a first year, and I've had to adjust my mindset frequently throughout my college experience. When it comes to academic work, practicing self-advocacy and giving myself the space I need has helped me deal with stress.

Other seniors have expressed that they feel a similar way. Lake Willett '25.5 agreed that being vulnerable and genuine with her academic advisors has helped her challenge perfectionist thoughts. Striding alongside her in the cool night air, I listened intently to her words.

"I associate perfectionism with wanting to do what's going to be perceived as the most perfect, which is sometimes incompatible with what you believe is the best [for yourself]," she said thoughtfully. Already, I realized, Lake had touched upon the most crucial aspects of perfectionism. For me, as well as the dozens of interviewees that Peterson interviewed for her book, perfectionism is an endless cycle that is deeply intertwined with self-worth. The conventional stream of thoughts goes something like this: I must meet goal A to succeed. If I do this, then I'll be confident enough to take on goal B. If I can't meet goal A, I'm probably not capable of meeting goal B. According to this line of thinking, achievement in the future is entirely dependent upon achievement in the past. It also suggests that you are not worthy if you don't achieve your goals.

For many, this is an appealing way of thinking despite its false promise of success. Hearing Lake's reflections over the past four years brought a smile to my face.

"I'm so much more solid in me," she said confidently as she described leaning into the things that bring her joy. Her words reminded me immediately of something I'd encountered in Peterson's book: the concept of pursuing an image versus developing an identity. Perfectionism is all about creating an image for others, while developing an identity is about doing the things that feel genuine even if they aren't perfect.

Though perfectionism doesn't present in the same way for everyone, it is nonetheless a difficult mental health challenge. At Middlebury, we have an opportunity to create more space for vulnerable conversations and to shift the educational culture towards one that values learning as much as achieving. As a senior, I am frequently asked the age-old question: "What have you learned during your four years here?" Several years ago, my answer might have been about challenging myself and pushing my limits. But now I can say with confidence, "I know what it means to give myself the grace and respect I deserve."

If you have experiences or thoughts you'd like to share about this topic, feel free to do so at go/PerfectionismSurvey.

SPECS Panther — environmentalism and sex: health, pleasure, justice

Op-Ed

***Zoe Gregg** is a member of the class of 2026 and a SPECS Peer Educator.*

Although environmentalism and sexual health are not generally considered related topics, SPECS Panther is here to explore how the two are deeply intertwined. Sexual health, justice and pleasure cannot be talked about without including the health of the Earth.

From a general health perspective, exposure to high levels of pollution can negatively impact the reproductive system. For people with uteruses, there is a demonstrated relationship between exposure to environmental pollutants, mainly coming from man-made sources like air pollutants and fertility. Fertility is dependent on a system of ovarian and hormonal signaling, and high exposure to air pollutants can dysregulate this process.

For people with penises, similar exposure to these pollutants can affect varying aspects of sperm parameters, such as sperm concentration and the sperm's ability to move. Furthermore, the results of climate change, such as extreme and more frequent natural disasters, can create barriers to access to sexual health resources like doctors, safe sex supplies and gender-affirming treatments. This phenomenon then directly affects a person's autonomy to choose what a healthy sex life looks like for them.

At SPECS, we believe that everyone deserves access to pleasure, regardless of uncontrollable external environmental factors. When anxiety induced by environmental repercussions is present, it becomes much harder to be in a mindset where one can fully engage and enjoy pleasure. The Dual Control Model of Sexual Response is a model that describes how one becomes aroused by using a gas pedal and brake metaphor. Gas refers to stimuli that turns somebody on and brakes are the factors that turn one off. In this circumstance, environmental inequality or climate change effects are factors that press on the brakes and halt access to pleasure. In addition, access to the outdoors boosts general wellbeing and mental health. These are aspects that help engage one's gas pedal and can increase pleasure.

For some people, environmentalism and sexual pleasure are deeply related and environmental degradation directly hinders their sexuality. Ecosexuality, or sexecology, is an environmental activist strategy where one finds sensuality in nature and focuses on the Earth's power as a lover. It can also be viewed as a new type of sexual identity where the queerness and non-binary aspects of nature are deeply relatable and create a sense of sexual empowerment.

These adverse reproductive health effects then connect to environmental justice. Minority populations face a disproportional rate of exposure to pollutants in comparison to white Americans. This is due to various factors, a main one being that pollution hazards are usually located within close proximity to redlined and other minority neighborhoods. These populations then face higher risk of pollution-related reproductive complications and more barriers to sexual health resources, which are already unequal due to systematic discrimination in the health and education sectors. Additionally, due to over a century of redlining, minority communities have less

SPECS Panther is a mascot for SPECS (sex positive education for college students) and serves the Middlebury community. As a part of Health & Wellness Education, SPECS Panther seeks to educate and spark independent dialogue, not be the end-all be-all resource on campus. We encourage Midd Kids to break down the walls of silence by engaging in sex-positive conversation — wherever, with whomever and about whatever is most comfortable, easy, and safe for you. Our editions will be educational!

access to outdoor spaces which worsens mental health, warms the physical temperature of communities and means they lack green spaces that act as pollution sinks. All of these aspects, along with other non-environmental barriers to sexual health, compound to disproportionally affect minority populations' sexual health. These direct and indirect adverse effects then also generate barriers in accessing pleasure, whether sexual or not.

So, what can you do about all of this?

From a sexual health lens, there are some sustainable swaps one can make. The Natural Love Company is a carbon neutral sex toy company that uses recycled plastic to make sex toys and plants a tree with every purchase. Condom brands like HANX, XO By Flo! and GLYDE are committed to making ethically and sustainably sourced rubber condoms. Using reusable menstruation products like menstrual cups or period underwear is another way to reduce waste. For porn consumption, Fuck for Forest is a porn production company that creates porn with an eco-sexuality focus. The non-profit then donates the proceeds from their pay-to-watch porn to reforestation efforts.

Another way to participate in environmental and sexual health justice is to go out and engage with these topics directly. Go tell someone how access to the outdoors and pleasure are connected and help them start thinking about these injustices. Go volunteer at the Knoll, or attend an educational talk about the environment or about sexual health. Think about your carbon footprint, and be passionate about advocating for equal access to the outdoors, pleasure and healthcare. Engage with Middlebury's Fostering Inclusive Recreational Experiences (FIRE), a student organization that works to create a safe and supportive environment for BIPOC students outdoors.Look into outdoor activities in your hometown and start being aware of the systematic divergences in access that manifest there. Finally, remember that you cannot talk about one without the other. Environmental justice and sexual health are intricately tied together, and it is critical to maintain an awareness of this in our thoughts and actions.

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NEW JOHNSON GALLERY EXHIBIT "FINDING HOPE WITHIN" SHOWCASES WORK BY INCARCERATED ARTISTS

By MAYA ALEXANDER
Editor at Large

Johnson Gallery's new exhibition "Finding Hope Within" platforms art that was created within the Vermont carceral system. The exhibit debuted to the public on Oct. 1 and will run until Nov. 14.

Brought to the Middlebury community from A Revolutionary Press, a non-profit collective of artists, the exhibition is a travelling collection which includes drawings, mixed media, poetry and narrative writings by incarcerated artists at two Vermont correctional facilities: Southern State Correctional Facility in Springfield and Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility in South Burlington. Additionally, there are pieces featured from the "Art from Guantanamo" collection, which were created by detainees who sought to imagine a world outside of confinement and to evoke memories of home.

A screening series that highlights the experiences of incarcerated individuals opened with "Art and Krimes" on Oct. 17. In the coming weeks, the series will feature films such as "Beyond Bars Restorative Justice," "Healing in Vermont," "26.2 to Life" and "Paint Me a Road Out of Here." There will also be a listening session of an album produced by CHIP, a collective of currently and previously incarcerated people.

On Oct. 21, the gallery welcomed Heather Newcomb of Vermont Works for Women and John Vincent of A Revolutionary Press for a panel discussion, where participants also engaged in a letterpress printing of a poetry broadside.

The exhibition was organized by Director of the Johnson Memorial Building and manager of the gallery Colin Boyd, Annalise Johnson '25.5, Vincent and Visiting Assistant Professor of History of Art & Architectural Studies Sarah Rogers.

An important component of the exhibition is the collaboration between "inside" and "outside" artists, offering viewers a chance to resonate with the inmates' humanity.

"Many incarcerated individuals create art as a way for self expression as humans have always done. They recognize that the making of art is transformative and that it can bring about healing, forgiveness, and growth. They would like to be seen as more than the worst thing they have done. We invite viewers to this exhibit to not merely look at the art but to 'see' the art and the artists. To 'see' something, to really see it, is to understand it and to become conscious of the place from where it comes," Vincent wrote.

"Finding Hope Within" came to fruition in late 2022, and the Johnson Gallery is the 12th venue for the exhibit, according to Vincent.

"I was asked by teaching artists who work in the Maine Department of Corrections for A Revolutionary Press to design and create letterpress broadsides of poetry by incarcerated artists for an upcoming public exhibition of art from Maine state prisons," Vincent wrote in an email to The Campus. "Once this was done I considered putting together a similar exhibit to be shown in Vermont. I approached the director of Rokeby Museum in the spring of 2023, who agreed to hold a summer long exhibition of art from correctional facilities in Vermont, Maine and Massachusetts."

At the conclusion of this inaugural exhibition, A Revolutionary Press returned the art to Maine and Massachusetts and decided to travel the Vermont based artworks to public libraries and other non-profit organizations throughout the state.

Johnson explained that she has been connected with Vincent through A Revolutionary Press for a number of years, and how he suggested adapting the exhibit to join current discussions on campus.

"He had suggested maybe trying to get something at the college from this past exhibit at [The Henry Sheldon Museum] and the works he's had in the libraries in Vermont. He had suggested wanting to kind of gear it towards what's happening here at the college more so and in classes. We had talked to Sarah Rogers, and she is teaching a class this semester on art migration museums. She had wanted, before we even suggested this, to bring this exhibition that has been collected in New York, it's a bunch of art from prisoners in Guantanamo Bay," Johnson said.

Rogers described how the pieces created by the detainees at Guantanamo are testimonies to the strength of the human spirit and how art has the potential to challenge those in power.

"It is the creation of visual representation when other forms of legal and political representation are systematically denied. Turning loose strings, teabags, and remnants of a crayon and scrap of paper into artworks, these artists reclaim their lives in the small space of creativity," she wrote in an email to The Campus.

Rogers was introduced to this work when she heard one of the artists, Mansoor Adayfi, speak at a conference on Arab American art last year.

"He is an incredibly powerful speaker whose story highlights the importance of art as a means of witnessing, of survival, and of creating glimmers of hope in the completely cruel and unfathomable conditions for those detained at Guantanamo," Rogers wrote.

Boyd shared a similar sentiment about the exhibition as a whole. He underlined the importance of bringing these artists into view and recognizing that their experiences are commonly overlooked.

"The part with the carceral system within Vermont, I think, is really quite important. For us here in Middlebury, the campus of Middlebury College is probably the antithesis of a prison in Vermont. So I hope that students and faculty and staff and people who engage with the gallery here can come in and reflect on those kinds of separations that we have physically with these people, but then there's also ways to make connections," Boyd said.

ELLIE TRINKLE/ MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Photos from the new Johnson Gallery exhibit "Finding Hope Within."

PRESERVATION AND PROGRESS: THE PRINTS OF PIRANESI AND THEIR JOURNEY TO MIDDLEBURY

By KIARA DOOKIE
Contributing Writer

Yale University Senior Conservator of Works on Paper Theresa Fairbanks-Harris delivered a lecture titled "Piranesi's Prints: Paper, Process, and Preservation" at the Mahaney Arts Center (MAC) on Oct. 16. The event, held in conjunction with the exhibition "Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Visions of Grandeur", offered a behind-the-scenes look into how conservators protect and interpret fragile works on paper and how technical study informs both restoration and art historical research.

Fairbanks-Harris discussed the relationship between material evidence and historical understanding. Through close visual analysis of paper texture, watermarks and ink distribution, she demonstrated how every print carries a record of its own making. Conservators, she explained, read these details much like scholars read texts, tracing the physical marks that reveal both the artist's process and the life of the object beyond the studio.

A leading figure in her field, Fairbanks-Harris has dedicated over four decades to the care and study of rare prints, drawings and manuscripts. Her portfolio includes works by Dürer, Rembrandt, Whistler and many others. She has trained generations of conservators and collaborated with many curators and art historians to expand the study of paper as a living, rather than static, material.

Building on this approach, Fairbanks-Harris framed her presentation around Giovanni Battista Piranesi's etchings of Rome — which depicted imagined ruins, monumental staircases and vast spaces that merge accuracy with invention. His prints capture both the grandeur of classical antiquity and the imaginative power of artistic reconstruction.

Fairbanks-Harris used these etchings to show how careful examination of structure and composition can yield new insights into both technique and preservation. One of her central points was the distinction between original prints and their many modern reproductions, particularly in the case of Piranesi.

To the untrained eye, a digital facsimile might appear convincing. However, to a conservator, the difference lies in the physical evidence embedded within the object itself. Elements like the impression left by the copper plate, the texture of handmade paper, the particular absorption of ink into its fibers and the presence of a watermark all work together to tell a material story that can't be replicated by scanning or reprinting.

To further demonstrate this gap between appearance and authenticity, Fairbanks-Harris brought with her a reproduction of a Piranesi print she had purchased online from Etsy. At a glance, the print mimicked the style and imagery of the original, but it lacked the qualities that define a true intaglio impression. While she acknowledged the ethical tension in purchasing a reproduction, especially as a conservator, she defended the act as pedagogical, as it can help students to spot differences between reproductions and original versions.

Fairbanks-Harris continued this tactile approach after the talk with a hands-on display at the front of the lecture hall. Samples of paper with different textures and weights, both original and reproduced prints, allowed for a side-by-side comparison. At the center was a copper intaglio plate, which invited participants to imagine the labor and craftsmanship behind each etched line. By placing these tools into the hands of her audience, Fairbanks-Harris returned to the core of her practice: a transmission of material knowledge.

This discussion provided a fitting complement to "Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Visions of Grandeur", on view at the Middlebury College Museum of Art until Dec. 7. The exhibition features etchings, drawings, books and a Roman urn altered by Piranesi himself, tracing his evolution from an architectural draftsman to a printmaker of major influence within European visual culture.

The exhibition drew primarily from the Middlebury College Museum of Art and the college's Special Collections and Archives. Additional works were on loan from the Yale University Art Gallery, the Morgan Library & Museum, Agnew's Gallery and a private collection. Most of the wall texts and labels were researched and written by students in the Winter Term seminar "Curatorial Lab: Piranesi, Artist, Architect, and Archaeologist". Under the guidance of Professor of History of Art & Architectural Studies Pieter Broucke and Jodi Rogers, curator of collections at the museum, 10 undergraduate students engaged directly in curatorial work and helped shape the exhibition, namely by purchasing the 1748 map of Rome "pianta piccola" that Piranesi contributed decorative elements to.

"The students read up, fast, on Piranesi as a person, an artist, a designer, an archaeologist and a polemicist," Broucke said. "The students already knew about the powers of conservation, and now that map, the student-initiated acquisition, is one of the centerpieces of the exhibition."

The exhibition unfolded across 10 thematic sections, each revealing a different side of Piranesi's artistic imagination. Students took the lead in selecting pieces, writing texts and working with Jodi Rodgers and other museum staff on layout and design. One section paired a first-century Roman funerary urn, restored and reimagined by Piranesi, with an etching he made of the same object, a pairing that captured the way he blurred the boundaries between artist, restorer and historian.

"Visions of Grandeur" itself became a study in collaboration. The curatorial process, from research to acquisition and restoration, echoed Piranesi's own practice of rebuilding the past through fragments. The exhibition came together through the combined efforts of students, faculty, conservators and the generosity of partner institutions like Yale, whose loans and expertise expanded what was possible within the college's walls.

For the students, the project offered a chance to step inside the living networks of museum work, to make decisions that shaped what others would see. In the end, "Visions of Grandeur" stood as both tribute and continuation, a meditation on the endurance of creative labor and the shared care that keeps it alive. Piranesi's work, still resonant centuries later, reminds viewers that every image is also an object, and every object bears the imprint of the hands that made it.

COURTESY PHOTO/MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART
Veduta del Tempio di Cibele a Piazza della Bocca della Verità [View of the Temple of Cybele in the Piazza of the Bocca della Verità], 1758, Etching on paper.

MAKES YA FEEL: FALL TUNES

By ELLIE TRINKLE
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

Gallery hoppers, Spotify stalkers, bookworms, Letterboxd users, and anyone who enjoys art, this is the place for you. Makes Ya Feel highlights art across all of its mediums, small and large-scale, that (you guessed it) makes ya feel!

The fall flies quickly in Vermont. Before you know it the leaves are gone, the days are darker and the Adirondack chairs are removed in preparation for the first snow. And while winter may seem to be creeping upon us, there are still some leaves that have yet to turn from yellow to red.

Maybe it's the senior in me, but I've found that music has been the best way for me to remember that it's not all over, just yet. So, here are a few songs that have been soundtracking my fall, and reminding me to stay present.

New on the docket: Cobra by Geese

Geese is a Brooklyn-based band that recently gained traction when frontman Cameron Winter released his solo album "Heavy Metal" in Dec. 2024. Before Winter moved audiences with his aching lyrics and noisy instrumentals, Geese was considered a cult favorite. The band formed back in 2016 while the band members were still in high school and developing their sound.

Their new album "Getting Killed"— released this past September — has been described by Pitchfork as their "most singularly idiosyncratic music [that] arrives to their largest audience yet." The album contains Winter's drawling voice reminiscent of their earlier music, but the production feels more mature — they are hitting their stride.

While there are so many songs to choose from, "Cobra" seems to be a fan favorite. It is a song about temptation, used through the metaphor of the cobra to charm the speaker's love interest. Beyond that, it's a song that feels warm: You can sink your teeth into it and linger for a second. The crunchy guitar interludes sound almost like humming. It's one of the more gentler songs on the album, but also maintains that classic Geese mix of playfulness and despair.

A classic in the rotation: It's Always You by Chet Baker

Chet Baker is a West Coast pioneer of 50s cool jazz; with his trumpet as his guide, he has created compositions that exude warmth. Initially popular for his instrumentals, his debut vocal album "Chet Baker Sings" quickly became a classic, specifically within the LBGTQ+ community.

"My Funny Valentine" and "I Fall in Love Too Easily" are the most popular tracks on the album, the former becoming Baker's signature song that he frequently performed in concerts. But the song that has always been a staple of any fall playlist is "It's Always You."

It's warm jazz that shines in its simplicity; lyrics that are gentle, instrumentals that tickle all the right parts of your ears and Baker's calming voice. He gives the song that was written for the 1941 film "Road to Zanzibar" an entirely new sound.

Of course, his signature trumpet appears in a lovely instrumental break. It unwinds your knots and seamlessly guides you to the next verse where Baker muses, "If a breeze caresses me, it's really you strolling by." It's the kind of song that wraps you up and lets you stay for a second.

A fun walk in the park: Sugar Water by Cibo Matto

Japanese-born duo Miho Hatori and Yuka Honda formed Cibo Matto when they met in 1994 in New York City. Their Italian name translates to "food matter" and their music blends hip-hop, electronic and surrealism.

"Sugar Water" is one of their songs that represents their sound, and name, exceptionally well. The song opens with the alluring, siren-sounding "oohs" that are overlaid on a stable drum beat. The lyrics reflect the band's playful nature: "I'm riding on a camel," "The buildings are changing into coconut trees."

The chorus of the song features trance-like "la la la's" that make you feel like you're suspended in space. In classic Cibo Matto nature, they never leave you floating in the psychedelic sound for too long; re-grounding the song by returning to a steady beat.

The song gives you a breather from those hazy, more obscured emotions and just lets you be. Which, in my book, is always what I'm looking for as the days get darker and colder. It's the perfect reminder that you can still have some fun, no matter how hard the wind is hitting your face.

Sounds like wearing a scarf: Memory Pools by Foxes in Fiction

"Memory Pools" is one of those songs that you keep forgetting about. It gets buried in your playlists and left at the bottom of your liked songs, but every time you rediscover it, it sounds even better than it did the last time.

I've been listening to this song for about four years now, and without fail, I always let go of it. And yet, I seem to rediscover it right when the leaves are turning. It's a song that is mainly instrumental; dreamy with a jingly tambourine to keep you centered. The guitar is perfectly noisy and the vocals are beautifully indistinguishable. It's the kind of song you can melt right into.

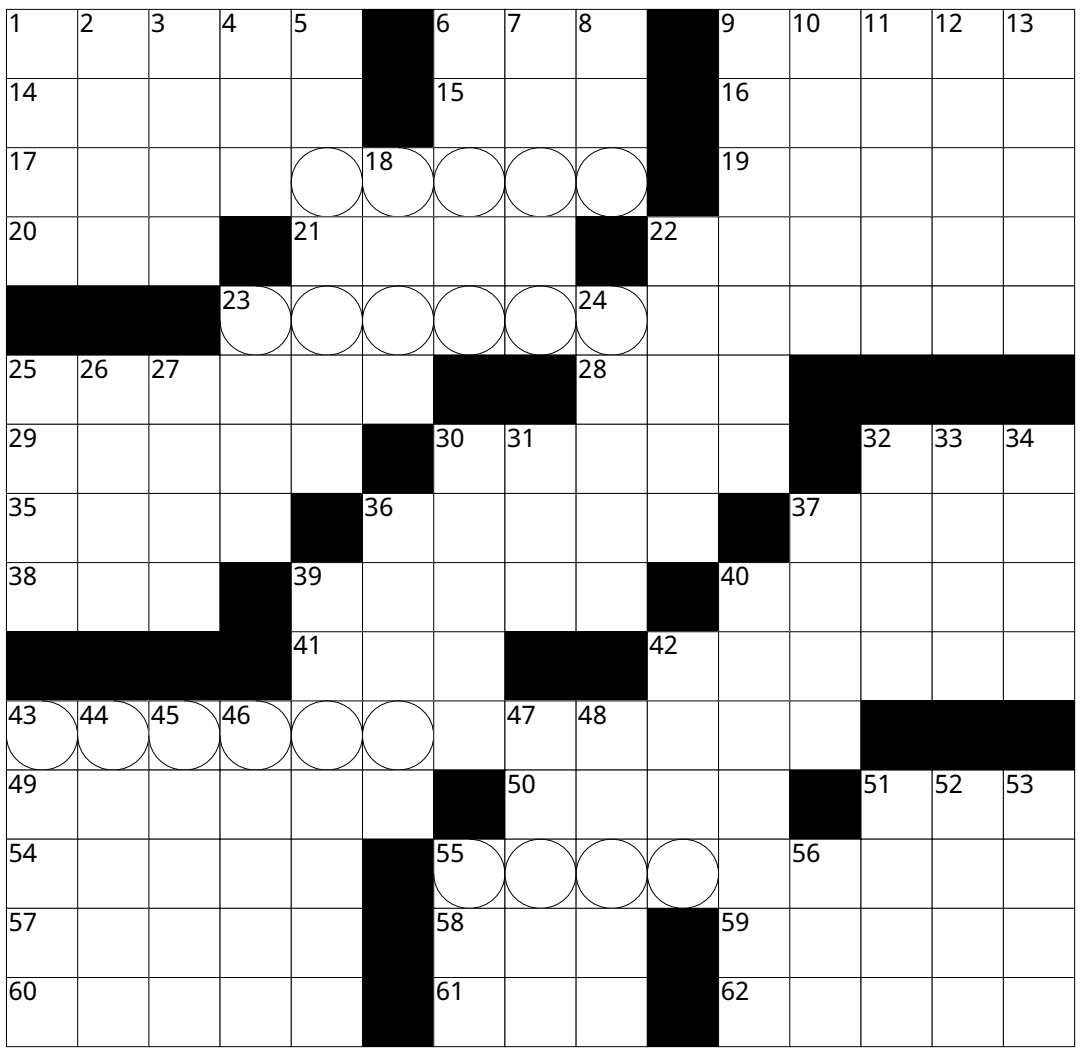
There is no better way to describe it than equivalent to putting on a scarf. One of those things you forget about, but when you pull it out of wherever it's been hiding for the past six months and dust it off, it's all you can think about. Different pieces of this song are stuck in my head each day, and I enjoy returning to the full song so I can hear the entire picture it creates.

Last week, I took my favorite striped scarf out of my closet and set it next to my coat. This week, I'm tucking this song into my back pocket to carry me through this season and into the next.

SKILES ROBERTS SALVADOR/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

State of the Union

Sam Merriam



ACROSS
1 Calmer brew
6 Bikini top
9 Bad habits
14 Amazon helper
15 Backtalk
16 Food poisoning source
17 *Best dishware in Beijing?*
19 Started a fire, again
20 Afternoon drink
21 Pie or sardine holders
22 Nitwit, in Madrid or Rome
23 *Thanksgiving meal in Ankara?*
25 Soon-to-be butterflies
28 2's letters
29 Docs default
30 French cap
32 Failure
35 Spirit
36 3B in SF or QB in NY
37 Tyrannical emperor
38 Summer hrs. in Miami
39 __ operandi
40 Flexes
41 "Honest" president
42 Association of teams
43 *Ab exercise in Moscow?*
49 Waiting to speak
50 Enthralled
51 Praising poem
54 Really like
55 *Takeout containers in Lomé?*
57 Cut off
58 Yes vote
59 Calendar item
60 Lock of hair
61 Garden area
62 Infamous skater Harding

DOWN
1 Foolish
2 Nobel laureate Wiesel
3 John of WWE
4 Tree splitter
5 For real
6 Bat eyes
7 Quick wash
8 Citation format
9 Not guilty, for example
10 Strand in winter weather
11 Double-dot punctuation
12 Best of the best
13 Indian instrument
18 Bring on, as an employee
22 "If I were to wager..."
23 Spot on air
24 Knitter's needs
25 Pathetic
26 Yankee's nickname
27 Rampage
30 47th VP
31 __ Claire, WI
32 Viral hippo Moo __
33 Lahore language
34 Prescription amount
36 Rot
37 Off the rocks?
39 Padded envelopes
40 Safest option
42 Slimming operation, for short
43 One way to cook chicken
44 Below
45 Push
46 Canker spots
47 Singer Sivan
48 Carried out, as war
51 Plow-pulling livestock
52 Dispute
53 "Como __?"
55 Bill at a bar
56 Label started by Drake

MISCHIEF MANAGED: MIDDLEBURY QUADBALL CHARMS THE COMPETITION

By KANAN CLIFFORD
Sports Editor

COURTESY PHOTO / JACKSON GATLIN

Middlebury Chasers fight for possession of the Quaffle.

Brooms up! Chants of exuberance rang out across Battell Beach last Saturday at 10 a.m., as Middlebury's quadball team faced off in the first game of the annual Middlebury Quadball Classic. Headbanded players clutching PVC pipes — their "brooms" — chanted:

"WHO ARE WE? WHO ARE WE? MIDDLEBURY!"

Quadball, also known as Muggle Quidditch, is an adaptation of the wizarding sport-on-broomsticks in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series — without dementors, Nimbus 2000's or Viktor Krum's Wronski Feint maneuver (a throwback for Potterheads).

Invented in 2005 at Middlebury College, the sport's name was changed in 2022 due to copyright issues with Warner Bros. and controversy over comments made by author Rowling about the transgender community. The name Quadball, though, fails to imbue the magic of Quidditch and the feelings of wonder and intense excitement it evokes in the pit of every first-time reader's stomach. Quadball feels impersonal and sterile, while Quidditch paints a portrait of soaring heights and childlike awe.

As Quadball declines in popularity across the country, from 96 teams participating in the 2011 national championship to just 70 in 2024, perhaps a reckoning about a more familiar name and thus an easier entryway into the sport is in order.

Regardless, that original enthralling nature of the Harry Potter novels inspired players on each team competing in the Classic (Harvard, Emerson, Brandeis, University of Vermont, and Middlebury) to join the sport.

In this year's Classic, Quadball teams include three Chasers, who attempt to score the Quaffle (a deflated volleyball — don't tell Tom Brady) through three raised hoops on either side of the pitch. Beaters try to hit opposing players with dodgeballs — called "Bludgers" — which forces them to touch their respective hoops, slowing any offensive advance. As Chaser Jason Wu '27 put it, "Quadball is really three different games. Chasers can't touch the Bludger, Beaters can't touch the Quaffle, and Seeking is its own insane challenge."

The Panthers' first game started slow, with cautious offensive approaches by both Middlebury and UVM Chasers, until Wu scored the first goal, weaving in and out of the defenders and firing the Quaffle into the middle net. Then, the game picked up speed. Quaffles were soaring through the air, Bludgers being fired without hesitation —- and I found myself crying "FOUL" each time an opposing Chaser made illegal contact, as if I were in the stands of the Quidditch World Cup.

The Panthers had a commanding grasp on scoring until the 35th minute, leading 5–4 when UVM scored a goal and simultaneously caught the not-so-Golden Snitch (which was released at the 20 minute mark), winning them the match.

The Snitch in Quadball is not a tiny golden ball with wings, but a rope ball tied to the back of a neutral person's shorts. Seekers must grab the rope without making excessive contact with the person guarding the Snitch. This Snitch this time around was particularly excellent, keeping both teams away and extending the game to the point where a butterbeer break should have been in order for fans and players alike.

The Panthers then played Vermont United, a club team composed of Quadball alumni, including former Middlebury College Quadball treasurer Josh Harkins '25. Harkins acknowledged the decline in Quadball play in the U.S., but emphasized the explosion of international Quadball, especially in Germany. According to Harkins, at the international level, teams run plays and engage in a much faster-paced, physical game. Wu confirmed.

"We have quick hockey-style line changes at the highest level of play. So a full team is 21 players, to be able to keep players fresh," Wu said.

Vermont United ultimately went 3–0 to claim the Classic title, although in the record books it goes down as an exhibition. An underclassmen-heavy Middlebury squad struggled, but nobody is giving up.

"This is really all about development," Wu said. "These are young, talented players who have tons of room to grow."

The reigning national champions continue to fight for another title and hopefully mold this club into a more cohesive unit.

Some might ask: Why spend precious study time with a broom between your legs and a deflated volleyball in hand, or worse, watching other people do so? For those who have yet to attend a Quadball game, let me present three reasons why the experience is worth it:

Number one, they can tackle — enough said. A Chaser with a ball may be tackled between the neck and the knees. Ditch football and come watch quadball.

Number two, the energy is palpable. Music that spans generations booms from speakers, alumni bring the intensity as referees, and to top it all off, delicious food options, including chocolate frogs, are on offer.

Finally, it's exciting to let your goofy side shine. Quadball might be unorthodox, but getting outside your comfort zone is good for the soul.

FIELD HOCKEY TEAM STUMBLES IN THIRD HOME LOSS

COURTESY PHOTO / WILL COSTELLO

Emma McCann '28 in a crowd of Jumbos.

By JULIA RANDOLPH
Contributing Writer

The last time Middlebury Field Hockey faced Tufts was last year's National Championship title game, with the Panthers taking home a seventh consecutive national championship after a hard-fought 2–1 victory. Over the weekend the two teams met again, but this time the result fell against the Panthers.

Prior to the game, Middlebury was 5–2 in conference play. Tufts, on the other hand, was 7–1. The stakes were high, and as starter Emma McNealy '28 confirmed.

"There's definitely an added edge when it comes to playing Tufts," McNealy said.

Midfielder Abby Weidner '27 agreed. "It's always expected to be an intense, tough, matchup between two very strong teams," Weidner said. "Many of us know or have played with members of the Tufts team, as with many other NESCAC teams, which always adds to the competitive atmosphere."

Those expectations held true. After a scoreless opening quarter, Tufts recorded the first goal on a corner at the game's 26-minute mark. The Middlebury team had generated several offensive corners just minutes prior, but were unable to capitalize on their chances.

While team stats remained relatively equal throughout the first half, the Panthers outshot Tufts in both the third and fourth quarter, registering 10 and eight shots respectively. In total, Middlebury had 21 shots (10 on goal), while Tufts only had nine (six on goal). The Panthers' shooting stats on Saturday reflect a broader team trend, with Middlebury having the highest shot count this season compared to the rest of the NESCAC. Nonetheless, it was Tufts who took full advantage of their opportunities.

Regarding corners, some of the best scoring opportunities for an offensive side like Middlebury, the Panthers, drew 15 compared to Tufts' three.

Tufts' second goal came early in the fourth quarter off an interception on Middlebury's 25-yard line. With the Jumbos leading 2–0, Middlebury was quick to respond. The Panthers scored from a corner just three minutes later, with Emma McCann '28 tallying her fifth goal of the season.

Tensions remained high throughout the rest of the quarter. The two sides played with grit and power, the Panthers eager to secure a lifeline while Tufts chased a decisive third goal. In the end, even with the significant shot differential and an aggressive final push from the Panthers, it was the Tufts team that walked away with a hard-fought 2–1 victory.

Despite the loss to Tufts, McNealy said that it was the best game that our team has played this season.

"It was a collaborative, gritty effort, one which we're looking forward to continuing in these last two games," Weidner said. "The biggest compliment you can give your teammates is to expect results and that's exactly what we plan to do leading into our next games."

The energy, grit and expectations are exactly what is needed to propel the Panthers heading into their final matches of the season.

Another motivating factor for this team has been the defensive corner unit. McNealy reflected that they have been remarkable this season, accrediting this strength to first-year assistant coach Lisa McNamara. McNamara previously played at Providence College, and McNealy notes that she "has brought a new intentionality and passion to the [defensive] unit."

The Panthers squad has two NESCAC games left: Bates at home this Saturday and Williams away the following Tuesday. Both Bates and Williams lost to Tufts earlier this season, and Bates currently sits four spots ahead of Middlebury in the national rankings at sixth. The Bobcats and Ephs are strong teams who have played Middlebury close in the past, but it is nothing the defending national champions can't handle.

MIDDLEBURY CREW COMPETES AT HEAD OF THE CHARLES REGATTA

Panthers on the Charles River.

VICTOR KORTE / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

By VICTOR KORTE
Contributing Writer

Three hundred thousand people, 12,000 athletes, 2,500 boats, 72 events, one river.

Last weekend, the Middlebury Crew team competed at the 60th Head of the Charles Regatta (HOCR) in Boston, the world's largest two-day rowing event that annually attracts the top collegiate and club crews from across the country. Around 300,000 spectators lined the Charles River over the three day competition, watching 12,000 athletes row in nearly 2,500 boats. As spectators packed the grass and bridges along the Charles, rowers walked their boats along the river, each turn drawing laughter and "Pivot!" jokes from passing competitors.

Walking along the banks, the number of college rowing shirts was almost greater than oars being carried. The regatta brought people of all ages together to celebrate the sport, from a great grandfather who rowed at Yale in the 1950s supporting his grandson to a group of fresh college graduates from California watching their dads compete in the 60 plus men's 8s event.

Bands and artists also performed, unexpectedly excellent tacos were served, and by Sunday afternoon, the number of people wearing HOCR merchandise had doubled (myself included).

On Sunday afternoon the Middlebury squad took to the water. The women's four finished in 20:13.284 and finished 21st of 41, beating Bowdoin and Wesleyan while trailing Clemson by two seconds. The men's four finished in 17.43.335, beating Washington College but fell short to most other NESCAC competition. The women's eight finished in 19:48.590, while the Middlebury men's eight finished in 15:49.948, besting Vassar, Bowdoin and Villanova, all programs to whom Middlebury lost last year.

Middlebury's crew program is a club sport, whereas most of the other Division three colleges at the race have well-developed varsity programs that recruit many of its players. The main distinction between club and varsity rowing is the funding for boats, recruiting and reputation.

"Being a club isn't really a disadvantage, it's just a different way of doing a team sport," Charlie de Ramel '28 said. "There's also more flexibility and less commitment compared to D3 or D1 programs, and it's more fun."

As Middlebury's fans tracked the boats on their phones, they waited excitedly to see the familiar cow oars splash around the Eliot Bridge and the large M's on the chests of Middlebury's rowers come into view. Overall, rowing is not an ideal spectator sport. Onlookers are only able to watch the boats up close for 100 meters before they are too far. However, for those 100 meters, students, alumni, parents and fans cheered for every boat as loud as they could. Every 20 seconds at the regatta, a new school or name was cheered for, an endearing moment of community and shared enthusiasm for the same sport.

That sense of community runs not just through the crowd, but deep within every program and team.

"When you are in a boat full of your best friends rowing on a lake tucked in Middlebury's mountains with a sunset illuminating the sky, you can't imagine a world where you wouldn't commit to these rowers every day," Anna Morrissey '28, a member of the women's four, said. "This is a sport where you truly cannot succeed unless you have your teammates there with you, and that commitment to yourself and each other is what makes it so special."

In a sport built on rhythm, trust and quiet endurance, the Head of the Charles stands as a rare moment when that world opens up, when the solitude of rowing becomes collective. Over three days, Olympians, club rowers, parents and alumni all shared the same pulse along the river. The regatta revealed what defines the sport at every level: connection between teammates, generations and the water itself.

For Middlebury, a club team competing among nationally-known varsity programs, that connection was especially visible — a reminder that spirit and cohesion can carry as much weight as status or funding. By the weekend's end, the sea of HOCR sweatshirts lining the riverbanks seemed to symbolize not just participation, but belonging.

MEN'S SOCCER FALLS TO #1 TUFTS

By THEO MANIATIS
Sports Editor

"Back's against the wall now, and we have to respond," Head Men's Soccer Coach Alex Elias said following Middlebury's 2–0 defeat to number one ranked Tufts. The loss marks the Panthers' fourth loss in their last five NESCAC games, jeopardizing playoff hopes.

The game was defined by an unlucky 15-minute stretch at the beginning of the second half. Picking up the ball on the left sideline just before midfield, a Tufts player evaded Pablo Gonzalez '26 (who appeared to have been shoved in the back) before bursting into the box to draw a penalty.

Although fans and players alike witnessed the foul on Gonzalez, the referee remained blissfully unconcerned. Tufts slotted the penalty into the bottom right corner to make it 1–0.

Stellar saves by Joey Waterman '26, including stopping a 3-on-1 breakaway, kept the Panthers' hopes alive. As time ticked away, Middlebury poured men forward to find an equalizer, but Tufts' defense held strong. Then, in the 78th minute, Tufts launched a quick counterattack to make it 2–0, deflating hopes of a Middlebury comeback.

The Panther vs. Jumbo rivalry was on full display, with five yellow cards issued. The spirited fans picked up on the intensity, cheering loudly and badgering the opposition with creative comments (most of which are not fit for print) and succeeded in rattling Tufts' left back, who began chirping back.

Middlebury fought hard until the final whistle but lost 2–0. Despite the defeat, Coach Elias praised his team's effort after the game.

"I'm excited to see how they respond to this," he said.

If Middlebury had won this weekend, they would have moved into fourth place in the NESCAC standings. Instead, the Panthers have fallen out of playoff position and are in must-win mode ahead of the last two conference contests.

Looking ahead, Elias called on his senior players "to step up, inject belief, have big performances, lead, work and outwork."

Next week, the Panthers have two more home games: Vassar on Tuesday and Bates — a crucial NESCAC matchup — on Saturday.

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MIDDLEBURY TO PALESTINE: EXCERPTS FROM THE GAZA TEACH-IN

By JUNE SU
Senior Multimedia Editor

On Oct. 3 in the Grille, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) hosted a Gaza Teach-In. Speakers emphasized Middlebury's connection to the Israeli Genocide of Gaza personally, intellectually and as fellow human beings. Two years into the genocide and with a new U.S. president in office, this event followed the precedent of the first Gaza Teach-In hosted on November 1, 2023.

"We see that the easy way out is to keep our heads down and stay silent, hoping that it will save us and keep us safe, but the only way out is to know that our struggles are the same. That is why we have organized today's teach-in, to highlight the connections and intersections of our struggles as a diverse community here on campus," an international student SJP member said to introduce the event.

With 21 different speakers, the Teach-In lasted from 4:30–7 p.m., turning out voices from all corners of the campus and the community. Two alumni who graduated in 2008 and 2009.5 joined virtually to share about their ongoing campaigns for family members dealing with repeated internal displacement in Gaza.

Wafic Faour, prominent Palestinian activist based in Burlington, spoke to the Apartheid Free Communities campaign. Faculty in departments from creative writing to political science, and religion to gender, sexuality, and feminist studies joined in, contributing their personal experiences and academic expertise.

Students gave speeches on personal perspectives and on behalf of affinity groups, political organizations, and academic departments. Represented organizations included Black Students Union, Voices for Indigenous People, Migrant Justice at Middlebury, Weybridge House and West Asian and North African Students (WANAS).

Participant Nicea Armstrong '27 told The Campus about her thoughts on the structure of the event.

"I thought it was really meaningful that students were running the whole thing and introducing everyone, and that there was a mixed order of speakers, showing that there are a ton of different angles to approach this. I thought it was a good mix of different ages, citizens and internationals, organizations and personal stories like with the Vietnam War story specifically," Armstrong said.

"On March 16, 1968, American soldiers entered the Sơn Mỹ village and executed over 500 unarmed, unresisting Vietnamese civilians. Raping and mutilating women and children, burning homes, and executing men, the Mỹ Lai Massacre remains the largest massacre of civilians by U.S. forces in the 20th century…

American-made bombs are no longer stifling the dreams of Vietnamese students but continue to effectively halt the ability for any Palestinian child in Gaza to learn. Instead of my Vietnamese mother behind the barrel of a gun, it is a Palestinian mother. Our media is no longer flooded with images of Vietnamese fathers, but with Palestinian fathers weeping over plastic bags that contain the remains of their children. Unlike the nameless children slaughtered in the Sơn Mỹ village, we know the names of the Palestinian children of over 66,000 Palestinian lives stolen in Gaza," Phoebe An '27 said to the crowd at the event.

Discussing food justice as yet another intersectional issue connecting to the Palestinian genocide, Maia McNeill '25.5, student representative of Weybridge House and organizer with ACORN Food Hub, described her approach in speech writing in an interview with The Campus.

"I wanted to be hyper specific and accurate about one kind of food and one kind of history. When we get into the abstract, like in vague ideas of what 'food sovereignty' means or vague ideas of Palestinian food, it's kind of detached from reality… I wanted to be able to say: Here was this boy, he was looking for this plant, and here's what this plant means. Here's why you might feel connected to this boy, and emotionally invested in his safety and security," McNeill said.

"I will never forget the video I watched over a year ago. A young boy in Gaza, maybe four years old, eats leaves off the ground. The man behind the camera asks him, "what are you eating?" The boy tells him that he's eating khabayza. The man from the camera says "no darling, that's not khabayza, I promise you it's really not…

What is Khabayza? Khabayza is a sweet round leafy green that grows wild in Palestine… It grows like weeds on the land and conflict after conflict, it's helped people in the region avoid starvation. As Gazan resident Amin abed described in a 2024 NYT interview, "It's supported us more than everyone else in the world. People survived the darkest chapters of the war on khobeza alone.

How are we supposed to react to this video of the boy? What do we do with this information? Here's a kid who's familiar enough with the land around him to look for khabayza, but too young to identify it properly, and hungry enough to eat it raw off the ground. How can I express all the love in the world for this man who is doing his best to pass down knowledge to this kid, even though it happens in conditions of starvation?" McNeil said in her speech.

Representatives from the Black Students Union, Bianca Belk '28 and Michael Sanjurjo '28 spoke about global systems of racism that enable the Western world to turn the other cheek in times of genocide in the Congo and in Palestine.

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SJP members tabled to distribute zines, know your rights cards, art, and direct aid opportunities at the Teach-In.

"Why is it that while our screens are filled with endless news… the exploitation and genocide in the Congo rarely make it into the conversation? The answer is brutal and uncomfortable: because the people being exploited are Black, and in a world built on racial capitalism, Black lives are treated as expendable, their suffering invisible, their labor a source of profit for others…

These struggles — Congo, Gaza, Sudan — are not separate. They are threads of the same cloth. The same companies that profit from cobalt in Congo profit from the weapons dropped on Gaza. The same powers that ignore Sudan's displaced millions are the ones that turn their backs on Congo's children. Oppression is global. Extraction is global. But so is our solidarity, if we choose it to be," Belk said in an excerpt from their speech.

Natti Martínez '28, a representative of Migrant Justice at Middlebury and a Latinx student, told The Campus why she spoke, explaining the dynamics of solidarity and political action in the midst of great fear and mass deportations.

"I feel like there's a lot of fear keeping many students of my community specifically silent - and not just silent, but unwilling to associate in any way with any sort of political activism. Although I do think the fear is real and it's so valid, I think there's also so much fear-mongering saying, 'well, just don't get involved and you'll be fine; you're protected as long as you don't speak out.' We've seen that this is very much not the case. I really wanted my speaking to show that there are times where this silence isn't gonna help us," she said.

"Palestinians have been making online videos in English for the purpose of catching your attention, to humanize themselves, and beg that you listen to them for 30 seconds because their lives are at stake. If that creates fear in you the same way it does when you're translating for family or community members because you realize how much you have to humanize them for them to be granted a sliver of visibility… then good," Martinez said to the group.

In their speech, a Palestinian international student who wished to remain anonymous spoke as a representative for West Asian and North African Students (WANAS) and summed up the meaning of the teach-in: cross-group solidarity.

"To be Arab, to be Palestinian, to be an immigrant, to be undocumented, to be a person of colour in this country, to be part of a community whose brethren face U.S imperialism and colonization in our homeland, is to live in fear of colonial repercussions on your family, on yourself. You are assigned guilt at birth and spend every moment trying to prove otherwise. And yet, I cannot find this excuse enough for me to stay silent. I have been increasingly disillusioned by a myth of self-preservation at the cost of everyone else," they said.